



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 19:11-20:6

“The Coming and Kingdom of Jesus Christ”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our series of studies which we have been following for the past four meetings in which I have had the privilege of speaking our theme has been “Death and Afterwards.” And at the beginning of the message today, I want to kind of bring you up to date in it. The subject for today is, “The Coming and the Kingdom of Christ,” and so for the Scripture we are turning to Revelation chapter 19 and verse 11 and reading through chapter 20 and verse 6. So turn to the last book of the Bible, and we shall begin reading with chapter 19 and verse 11. Now in this particular section of the Book of Revelation we are just at that point at which John is given visions concerning the Second Advent, the over throw of the enemies who are upon the earth and then the establishment of the Kingdom. Verse 11,

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed

him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and enslaved, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, (wasn't much of a battle was it?) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that

hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

You know I was once serving in a church and after I had been preaching for a number of months, people began to bring their Bibles. And after a while one of the elders came to me and he said he didn't like this kind of preaching that caused people to bring their Bibles, that he felt that all of this movement with the Bible in the morning service was not very dignified, and so he recommended that I preach in such a way that there would be no rustling of the pages of the Bible because that embarrassed the visitors who came in among other things. Now we don't intend to embarrass the visitors, and I think that probably his thought on that point was certainly true that some people are embarrassed when they come into a congregation in which Bibles are carried and pages are rustled, and of course we don't intend to do that. But it is I think a very important thing that we study the word of God and I think it's very important too that we bring our Bibles and that we rustle the pages as we turn them. That is one kind of” russellite” that it is alright to be. [Laughter]

May God bless the reading of his inspired word. It is very important that we feed upon this book and that we come to know its truths. For if we do not we shall make shipwrecks of our lives. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee that we are able to look into the word of God. We thank Thee for its message. We know, Lord, that there are many things in the word of God which appear to be somewhat beyond the understanding of all of us. We pray for wisdom and that Thou wilt enlighten us and give us understanding of the deep things of the word of God.

We know too, Lord, that there are sections of Scripture such as the one which we have just read that appear to be so fanciful to the modern mind as to be absolutely incredible.

But we thank Thee that the Book of Revelation is part of holy Scripture, and that through this book and the truths contained within it, Thou hast given hope to countless thousands, perhaps millions, down through the ages. We know its truths, and we know, Lord that its message is plain and clear that the time is coming when Thou shalt assume in visible form the reigns of world government and shall establish Thy Kingdom upon the earth. And with the Apostle John we say, “Even so come quickly Lord Jesus.”

In the meantime Lord we pray that Thou wilt give us the desire to study the word and then in the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out in some measure at least its teachings in our lives. We sense Lord that in this auditorium there is a great capacity for ministry of the word and representation of Jesus Christ in this community. And Oh Father were pray that Thou wilt give us no rest nor peace until Thou art using us to the glory of Thy name. Deliver us from any sense of pride and self sufficiency for we know this is self defeating. Enable us Oh Lord, to remember that our sufficiency is of Thee and may in genuine not mock humility we go forth with the good news concerning the Lord Jesus and lose our selves that others may come to know him.

We thank Thee Lord for those who are here today with problems, perplexities; decisions perhaps to make that are great. We know that Thou art the one who canst answer all of our prayers and all of our desires. And we pray now that our hearts may be lifted up to Thee and may look to Thee for the answers and the solutions. We thank Thee Lord for the way Thou hast cared for us and protected us. We think of several who are in bed or in the hospital and we pray Oh God Thy blessing upon them in a spiritual and also a physical way. Restore them to health and strength. May the experiences be experiences that are edifying.

We thank Thee for the privilege of proclaiming the word and pray Thy blessing upon everyone who today in this city and to the ends of earth is proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. And Lord may Thy blessing rest upon us in the meeting and the ministry that follows, and also in the music. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Our theme for the past four times has been “Death and Afterwards,” and if I may I would like to spend the first five minutes or so in review. Now we have learned, I hope, these things about the future of the Christian and the non-Christian. The first place we learned that the term death was used of three experiences. It is used of spiritual death or the separation of the spirit from God. Adam died in the Garden of Eden when he disobeyed God, but he did not die physically, he died spiritually.

Then the term death is used of physical death, the separation, and a temporary separation it is, the separation of the spirit from the body. Physical death, when a person dies the body remains here, but it is no longer that person. Someone has left the body. The body is now a something after physical death. All of us face physical death, and I think I mentioned to you that G. Campbell Morgan once said that he had never met a man who was not fearful of physical death. It is normal and perfectly proper for us to be afraid of physical death. I heard a fellow who once said if he knew where he was going to die he'd never go near the place. [Laughter] And he expressed exactly the attitude that many of us have.

Then we also learned that there is a life after death, and that the life after death is testified to by both reason and revelation. History such as the experiences of the great men of the past, even men who were not Christians like Socrates, has witnessed to life after death. Intuition witnesses to life after death as well as logic. For of course we recognize the incompleteness that exists in this life if we really examine our lives. And the moral order of our life testifies to it too because there is not justice in the final sense in this life. Revelation testifies very plainly to the fact that there is life after death.

We said just a word or two about the place of the dead in Old Testament times. When a man died in Old Testament times he went to a place called “Sheol,” in the New Testament called Hades. Sheol/Hades was the place in which not only the believing dead, but also the unbelieving dead, I should have put that reverse, but at both of them

were found, Sheol/Hades, and that there is some indication that there was a change in Sheol/Hades after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who had believed in him were transferred to paradise, and from the time of the cross on paradise is up. Paul says he was caught up to the third heaven to paradise. So the place of the dead who are believers is paradise, or the presence of the Lord.

We also learned that all of the dead are conscious, that they have memory, one of the capacities that we have if we are conscious. And whether we are saved or lost whether we are Christians or non-Christians we are conscious after we pass this life. It is a very serious thing to talk about hell. And it's a very serious thing to realize that when we pass out of this human existence, and we pass out of it without Jesus Christ we pass into a place of torment being reserved for the lake of fire. And it's a very serious thing I say to talk about that. And I think that always, as Mr. Moody used to say when we talk about it, we should try to talk about it with tears in our voice because it's a very serious thing to think about the fact that when some men leave this earthly existence they pass into a place of torment and are reserved there for the judgment of the great white throne.

We also learned that believers are given their resurrection body at the rapture of the church, that is, when the Lord Jesus comes in the air. That believers can look forward to three states of life, we are clothed with our natural bodies now. If we die before Jesus Christ comes we shall be unclothed, that is our spirits go to be with the Lord. Our bodies are placed in the grave awaiting the resurrection. For remember the term resurrection has to do with the body not the spirit, then when the Lord Jesus comes again and we come with him if we have died, or if we are upon the earth and have not died then the resurrection takes place and the body that has died is raised from the grave by the Lord Jesus. It unites with the spirit and those who are living are caught with changed bodies to meet those individuals so that the whole church will meet the Lord Jesus in the air. Then we shall enter into the third stage of our existence which is to be clothed upon with a resurrection body. So, we are clothed, we are unclothed, and we are clothed upon.

Now Paul didn't want to be in this unclothed state, and so he hoped that he might live until the rapture of the church, but he did not have that privilege. Some of us may. For those who are alive when Jesus Christ comes, they of course will not have that unclothed time, experience. Every Christian, then, we saw in our last study faces the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Now at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ we are not judged with reference to our sins. We are judged as sinners at the cross of Jesus Christ. And once we have received him as our savior our eternal destiny is settled and sealed. We are sure to be with the Lord. We are judged as sons of the family during this life, and from time to time it is necessary for God to exercise discipline in the family. Sometimes he does that by means of physical difficulties. As a matter of fact discipline can even go so far as to issue in our physical death, but we are judged as sons in this life, and God has a very, very strict and fair system of discipline because he wants everyone of us to ultimately be the kind of son who will bring glory to him. So from time to time we have to be scourged as sons, and if we have some experiences that indicate that he is dealing with us in discipline we want to be sure not to react against it and kick like a mule, but rather submit. Be exercised by it and learn from that experience. Remember that we had fathers in our earthly life who tried to train us. Some did a poor job. Some did a very good job. No one did a perfect job, but we have one in heaven who does a perfect job. And so we are to be exercised by that discipline.

Now then we are judged as servants at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. That means our work is reviewed. And unfortunately Paul presents a very admonitory picture because it appears that some are going to stand at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and are going to be saved so as by fire, but they themselves while they are saved they are going to be saved without rewards.

Last night I was sitting at the dinner table with a man who was sixty years of age in this city. He has been a Christian for many years, perhaps at least forty. He's made a

success in business, and now he was talking about his life as a Christian. He said, “You know, I’m a very strict Calvinist.” I said, “Yes, so am I.” He is an old friend; we have taught each other these truths. And he said, “But now I am deeply troubled.” He said, “I’m troubled because I’m sixty years of age and I’m wondering if my life has really counted for Jesus Christ as it should have.” And I thought that was one of the most salutary things that this man has said in a long time. I just wish that young men at the age of twenty would have the same exercise of heart. Looking back over the past life successful in every way, a fine upstanding man, the kind of man you can admire as a man, but now he asked the question that is really meaningful. Is it possible that I’ve reached this stage in life and now I face the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, and I’m not going to have very many rewards? It’s something for all of us to think about. We have the foundation. We have believed in Jesus Christ, but what kind of super structure are we building upon it?

On our street, a few years ago a house was built. A builder came in, I think his foundation was in accordance with that with which the building required and then he put up his dwelling on that foundation, but unfortunately he left off any subflooring. Now anybody who knows anything about building a house knows that subflooring is kind of necessary, and I’m waiting for the day when someone in that house is going to plunge through the floor to underneath the house. You see he has built inadequate superstructure upon the foundation, and some of our lives are very much like that as Christians. It’s very important that we remember then that we remember the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Now today we’re going to move to the next event after the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. And that is the second coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth and the Kingdom that follows. Now the second coming of Jesus Christ is more certain than death. It is more certain than death because not all of us shall die. There is one generation which shall be alive when Jesus Christ comes for the church that shall not die, but every single person

shall at one time or another see the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. That event is absolutely certain. It is more certain than death. We say there is nothing more certain than death and taxes, but there is. It is the second coming of the Lord Jesus. It is absolutely certain.

Now we have a little bit of a problem in the Bible, and I'm not going to go into great detail over this. If you're interested come and see me afterwards or at a later time we'll talk about some of these details. But we have a little bit of a problem in the Bible over the second coming of Jesus Christ because in some places we read that he shall come for his saints. In other places we read that he shall come with his saints. In some places it seems that he comes and only the believers know that he has come and they are caught up to be with him in the air. In other places it teaches that when Jesus Christ comes the whole earth shall know that he is here. In other words, there seems to be some contradiction in the accounts concerning the second coming of Jesus Christ. That introduces a dilemma. In other words, how shall we interpret these passages? G. Campbell Morgan used to say, “I preach by setting up a dilemma, and then I seek to solve it.”

I heard of an insurance salesman the other day who wanted to sell some policies to a woman. He had already spoken with her before about insurance, and so he called up and asked if he might come by that night and discuss the insurance. And she said, “Yes you can come by, but I want to warn you that I probably shall be in a dilemma.” He said, “That's perfectly alright. The last person I called on was in a kimono.” [Laughter] But now, we do have a dilemma over these two sides over the coming of Jesus Christ. What is the solution?

Now the solution of this is that the second coming of Jesus Christ is in two stages. He comes for his saints in the air, and then after the time of judgment which he brings upon the earth, he comes to the earth with his saints. He comes at the rapture and then he shall come at the revelation. In other words, the Second Advent is in two stages.

Someone might say, “Well, Dr. Johnson you apparently believe in three comings of the Lord Jesus, whereas the New Testament speaks of the second coming of the Lord Jesus. He shall come a second time. No, it’s really a second coming but it has two stages. You read the Old Testament prophecies and you will notice, for example, that there are some prophecies that say that he shall be born in a particular place. Take Micah, it says, “He shall be born in Bethlehem of Judea.” Now that has to do with his birth. Then you read of prophecies in the Old Testament that say that, “They pierced my hands and my feet,” a reference to Psalm 22. But that occurred at the time the Lord Jesus died on Calvary, thirty years or more intervened between the birth and the death of the Lord Jesus and yet all are comprehended within the term the first coming or the first advent of the Lord Jesus, and so the Second Advent is an advent in two stages. One for the church, we go to meet him in the air, and then he comes after he executes judgment upon the earth to the earth itself, and that is the Second Advent. So, in the future I'm going to speak about the rapture as his coming for the church, the Second Advent as his coming to the earth to establish his Kingdom upon it. It’s going to be wonderful, you know, to hear the Lord Jesus come and take us to be with him. And I think this is hope that should stir up all of us who are Christians.

Last week I read an article by William Pattengill on the coming glory, and he went on to talk about the fact that he was looking for the glory of the Second Advent and also of the rapture of the church. And he said he had sometimes wondered what the Lord was going to say when he came with a shout. He said, “You know he stood at Lazarus’ grave and he said, ‘Lazarus come forth.’ And it’s just possible,” he said, “That we shall hear the Lord Jesus call everyone one of us. But it seems to me,” he said, “That that would take to long if he were to go through the whole roll.” The roll is not going to be called up yonder according to Mr. Pattengill. He said that in his mind he was going to say, “Come up hither,” and everybody would know it was for them. And then he added, “And I'm

going too.” And you know I'm going too when the Lord Jesus calls from heaven. We are going. We are going to be with him.

Now this is a marvelous hope that we Christians have, and you know we hear about this so often that we can sit--and I do the same--we can sit in our chairs or in our pews, and we can hear these glorious words of the coming of the Lord Jesus and they don't seem to make much difference to us at all. Let me show you what the world has as a hope.

This past week I read a report which came ultimately from a Jewish news paper. A rabbi Richard Rubenstein was talking before a group of students at Emory University in Atlanta, and this is what he said. “I believe that God is the holy nothingness. Not a thing, but the source out of which all things come and all things will ultimately go back to God.” He also said that if God is regarded as the source of hope that we should give up hope. Human existence, he described, as ultimately hopeless and meaningless. He said Jews in particular cannot look at God as the Lord God of history for how can one explain such a God in relation to Auschwitz and the degrading slaughter of six million Jews? He said, “Christians might interpret the horror of Auschwitz as a final sign for the Jews to convert and accept Jesus Christ as the savior of Israel,” the Jews, he said. And that of course indicates that they do know that Christians are anxious for them to be converted to the Lord Jesus as Messiah, but he said, “The Jews still await the Messiah and redemption.” But now notice he doesn't really believe that. Indeed Rubenstein does not see the possibility of a Messianic Kingdom on earth, but only when all creation and man are returned to God in “an ecstasy of nothingness.” And then he said before he spoke, “I reject the concept of a transcendent God entirely. God is where we come from and where we go to, but he is just not involved in the world in any way.”

Now when Christians read their Bibles and notice the tremendous hope that we have you know it means a tremendous thing to realize that we have a definite hope set forth in the word of God and a definite hope that is confirmed to us by the Holy Spirit

who has ministered to us and convinced us that these things are true. Well now we want to look very briefly at these events which are set forth for us here because these are experiences which you and I shall have if we are believers in the Lord Jesus.

Now remember the context of the Second Advent in chapter 19 and verse 11 in the Book of Revelation. We have here the last visions of John in which he is telling us of the overthrow of the last forms of Gentile government upon the earth. He has spoken of the overthrow of Babylon, the great final city in which all of the rebellion against God is finally summed up and symbolized. And now he describes the coming of someone from heaven upon a white horse who is going to overthrow the enemies of God. He sees the heaven open and he sees someone upon a white horse, and “he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

Now this is a literal historical event, but it is described in symbolic language. I have some Christian friends who have a great deal of difficulty with the Book of Revelation because they do not realize that while this book tells us of things that are definite and historical and are just as certain as the events of the life now, nevertheless they are described for us in symbolic terms. The Lord Jesus is going to come from heaven like this person upon the white horse, but Jesus is not going to come upon a horse that could be entered in the Kentucky Derby. Some horse like Proud Clarian or Kelso or Damascus or any horse like that. John is seeing a vision and he sees this one come upon a white horse in order that the vision might express to him thoughts that he could not possibly express were he speaking in language that does not have symbol. So we must remember that Jesus Christ is no Bellerophon on a mighty Pegasus at the Second Advent. He came at his first coming on a lowly donkey, but at the second coming he is coming in the brightness and the glory and the majesty of the Son of God. And the only way in which we could possibly understand this or even try to picture it is for John to present it to us in symbolic language.

Now then he introduces it then with that description, and he describes his coming, and in the description that is given us here, Jesus Christ is described as a royal commander who is followed by dazzling retinue. He wears the diadems of the king of history, the king of prophesy, the king of providence, the king of heaven, the king of Hades and the king of grace. He is the supernatural, sovereign, transcendent Son of God. It is this person who is going to come to earth and to establish his Kingdom upon the earth. The seed of a woman is going to finally crush in every way the head of the serpent. And this is one stage along the way, a great stage along the way to that ultimate victory of the Son of God, and so John presents the Lord Jesus as coming here.

Now I need not speak to this audience about this very much because just a few months back we went through the Book of Revelation. I want you merely to notice the 14th verse so that we can notice the truth that pertains to our theme that we are trying to develop. Notice the 14th verse says, “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” And then also you will remember that Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, as well as in Colossians chapter 3 and the Old Testament also, points out that when the Lord Jesus comes to the earth at his Second Advent those who are the saints of God shall be with him as he establishes his Kingdom upon the earth. So one of the events toward we look as believers is after our death and after the resurrection and after the judgment seat of Jesus Christ is this glorious experience of coming with the Lord Jesus at his Second Advent. And you and I shall have this experience.

Well now let's move on to the next section, the great supper and the binding of Satan which begins in the verse 17 and finally concludes in verse 3 of chapter 20. Now since here we do not have anything that is specifically spoken of us, let me just sum it up to move on to the passage concerning the Kingdom. Many think of God only in terms of comforting and consoling, in terms of seeking and saving, in terms of loving and pardoning. We ought to speak of God in the terms of laughing and judging because he

who sits in the heavens shall laugh and shall come and execute judgment upon the earth. And here we read it. John is given a vision of it. He sees an angel standing in the sun and the angel cries out to the fowls that fly in heaven and they are to come to the great supper of God. This, of course, is a grim counter part of the marriage supper of the lamb which is described in the early part of the chapter. We who are believers shall sit down at the marriage supper of the lamb, but those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ shall eventually upon this earth, those who are living, be the food of the fowls of the heaven in this vision. In other words, the Lord Jesus shall come and overthrow them.

Then there follows in chapter 20 the most sensational arrest in all of history. An angel and this must be very humiliating for Satan in the Prince of the Angels, he was the greatest angel, it must be very humiliating but there comes an angel who has a key to the bottomless pit and he lays hold of the dragon himself, and he binds him for a thousand years. I say this is the most sensational arrest in history. It's far more sensational than the arrest of John Dillinger, of Baby Face Floyd or of Lee Oswald, when this angel comes and takes Satan and casts him into the bottomless pit, binding him there for a thousand years, well that is sensational. But it's true, and it shall come to pass.

Now then with that John describes the Kingdom, and you and I shall participate in this Kingdom, and so this is something in which I am very much interested. In fact I look forward to the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus. I'm looking forward to the Lord Jesus' coming in the air, but I'm also looking forward to the events that follow. And we read that John,

“Saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Many Christians down through the years have prayed, “Thy Kingdom come.” Now this is the answer to that petition when the Lord Jesus establishes his Kingdom upon the earth. I’ve often thought it’s kind of a strange thing that great congregations can pray Sunday after Sunday, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” and then when you speak to them about the fact Jesus is going to have a Kingdom on the earth, they say, “No, we couldn't possibly believe anything like that.” And then Sunday after Sunday still say, “Thy Kingdom come.” I said that I don't know how many times in my church, didn't realize that there was going to be any Kingdom on the earth, and then when I was converted and came to read the Bible and saw there was such a thing as a Kingdom of God I mentioned it to my friends. I said, “Isn't it wonderful. The Lord Jesus is going to come and establish his Kingdom upon the earth.” They say, “Ah that’s premillennialism.” I said, “Yes, it’s what the Bible teaches.” “We don't believe in premillennialism,” and next Sunday morning we’re sitting right by the side of one another and together we say, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” That’s very hard for me to understand.

Now here we have the answer to it. Of course, now that the Roman Catholic church has pronounced upon this--now you know I try to keep from mentioning specific persons, but this time I had to do it. And it isn't because I don't have love for Roman Catholic's. I would like to see everyone of them converted to the Lord Jesus Christ just like Baptists or Methodists, or Presbyterian if they're not Christians or Independents. They're in our churches not saved too. But the Roman Catholic church about six years ago pronounced upon the millennium. It said that the thousand years were not to be taken in a literal sense, but in a spiritual sense, and I was reading a Roman Catholic commentary this past week. And the writer said, “This ends the controversy almost as old as the apocalypse itself.” So, when the biblical commission pronounces that ends the controversy, but it doesn't end the controversy among others who are not subject to the

Bible commission, and it just so happens that this idea of a Kingdom of God upon the earth is the teaching of the early church.

About two weeks ago a woman came to me and asked for some information on this because she was speaking with her pastor. She had become a Christian and she is very much interested in studying the word, and he claimed that premillennialism was something new. And so, I just went back to--and I have here some of the papers that she handed me back. I have here not only some citations from outstanding historians like Harnack and Schaff, but also the quotations from Papias, from Justin Martyr, from Arminius, from Tertullian, from the Epistle of Barnabas and when she handed these to her pastor, he didn't say anything, and about two weeks later he handed them back to her and he didn't say anything then either because you see it's without question the teaching of the early church that Jesus Christ was going to come and establish his Kingdom upon the earth. We do not have any certain evidence of anyone in the 2nd century who believed otherwise other than Justin Martyr's statement who said, "There were some who didn't believe this, but we who are right minded Christians do believe it," Justin Martyr said. So, not only that but down through the centuries, not only the great preachers, but also many of the great Christians and others, men like Milton and Pope and Toplady and Bunyan and the Mathers in our country and Bengal, and well you could just go on and on and on have believed that the Bible taught that there was going to come a time when the Lord Jesus was going to rule and reign upon the earth, and John describes that Kingdom. And he says that they shall rule and reign with the Lord Jesus for a thousand years, and furthermore he adds the beatitude of verse 6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

And so the New Testament then teaches that following death, we shall go to be with the Lord if we are believers in him. We await the resurrection. We shall be given a resurrection body when the Lord Jesus comes in the air to take the church to be with him.

Then we face our Lord at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. Following that, then the Lord Jesus shall come to the earth, and we shall come with him and as he defeats the enemies of God, we shall share in his victory. And then as he establishes the Kingdom upon the earth, we shall share in that Kingdom with him. And we shall rule and reign with him for a thousand years. Death, you see, is the beginning of some wonderful experiences for a Christian. And consequently we should be motivated by this to pray much more fervently than we ever have before, “Thy Kingdom come.”

I have, I say, some friends who frequently like to say to me when I speak about the Kingdom, “Well it seems to me that that’s a kind of carnal expectation to expect a Kingdom of God on the earth. That’s a kind of a sensual view point like a Mohammedan might have that Jesus should actually come to the earth and establish his Kingdom upon it.” I always reply in this way: first of all I say that it is not unspiritual for we may have spirituality in mortal bodies. We may have spirituality in all of the experiences of our present life. It is not unspiritual to say that something material shall be in existence. Something that is material is not necessarily unspiritual. Our Lord Jesus was here in a material body. Was he unspiritual? Of course not. But then I also like to say, “Well I’ll tell you what, when the angels stop talking about the Kingdom of God upon the earth, when the apostles stop talking about the Kingdom of God upon the earth, when the great prophets stop talking about the Kingdom of God upon the earth and when they described the Kingdom they dipped their pencils in a rainbow, Mr. Schofield used to say. When they stop talking about it, then I’ll stop talking about it. And if it’s carnal and if it’s sensual and if it’s unspiritual, I still will take my stand with the prophets, with the Apostle Paul, and with the great saints who have given us the New Testament, for if they talk about it then I shall talk about it.”

Now this hope is not something that I hold to because I think that it is theologically correct. I would, of course, but it has a very practical message for us today. I do believe with all my heart that if you in this audience were to really allow the hope of

the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, the rapture and the revelation to grip your heart you would be a different Christian. As a matter of fact you would be just like my friend last night. You would be saying right now at your stage in your life, "What about my life in the presence of the Lord? Is it possible that I have lived these years and been unfruitful as a servant of him?"

Charlie Trumbull who founded the *Sunday School Times* many years ago was speaking with three Christians. He said one of them was an outstanding business man who had been very successful. Another was an outstanding lawyer, and a third was just an ordinary house wife. He was kind of thrilled over the Second Advent and he spoke to one of them, they were in a Sunday School convention in Zurich Switzerland. And he said to this man, he said, "Have you ever made a study of the Second Advent?" And this man who was a leader in his local church said, "Mr. Trumbull no I haven't." He said, "As a matter of fact I've been too much engaged in practical Christian things in order to be, so much engaged in that that I could not be interested in the Second Advent." He said, "As a matter of fact don't you think that we have to get the world into a pretty good shape before Jesus Christ comes back to it?"

And then he spoke to his lawyer friend a little while later, and he said, "Have you made a study of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ?" He said, "No, I've never indulged in those speculated things." And then he spoke to the woman who was the housewife. He said to her, "Have you made a study of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus?" She said, "No, as a matter of fact the only thing I do is just look at the Bible and see what God tells me to do, and I just go and do that. I feel that if I can just do what he says that those things will take care of themselves." Now that may sound very wise, but I would, of course, like to ask you this question, "Then why did God write these things in his book?" If it is unnecessary for daily living why did he do this? As a matter of fact the Bible says, "He that hath this hope of him," this hope of the second coming, "Purifieth himself even as he is pure." And when the world war came, Mr. Trumbull said the faith of the first

man was almost completely shattered because you see he had not looked at the word of God and he was not prepared to face what was to come. I want to tell you this that if you know of this hope of the Second Advent you will be a different person.

AJ Gordon used to visit in New Hampshire in the summer, and he had his kids with him and he loved to be with them and they loved him. And he was a Baptist preacher from Boston, and one day he spoke to the kids in the morning. And he said, “I’ve got an appointment in Boston, and I have to go.” But he said, “I want you to be waiting for me at the train,” and so they took him down to the train, and the kids went home, and Mr. Gordon said, “They were just little kids, and they went immediately to mother and they said, ‘Mommy, Daddy may be coming home this afternoon, said wash us up and put us in our best clothes because he told us to meet him at the train.’” And he was gone actually for three or four days. And every day Mrs. Gordon said, “They came and said, ‘Get us ready to meet Daddy.’” And she used to say, “I’ve never known my kids to be so anxious to have soap and water on their faces and new clothes on. You see the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus that hope is the soap and water of the Christian. “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

May God help us to have the spirit of the Apostle John when he said, “Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.” Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father who sent the Son, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, the entire God head point us forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ who when he comes shall take us to be with him and who also shortly thereafter shall slay the enemies of God and establish his Kingdom upon the earth. May this hope, Oh God, dominate us throughout this week. Enable us to...

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